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SIPDIS

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CAIRO FOR AGRCOUN CHAUDHRY  
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SUBJECT: HIGHLY PATHOGENIC AVIAN INFLUENZA DETECTED IN A  
TEXAS FLOCK - JORDAN

REF: STATE 39598

1. Econoff accompanied by FAS specialist delivered reftel demarche to Ministry of Agriculture Secretary General Awni Taimeh on Feb 26. They reviewed reftel points and left behind a non-paper on subject as prepared by Agrcoun Chaudhry, who was in Amman for a USDA-sponsored conference.

2. Professor Taimeh relayed that the Government of Jordan Animal Health Committee was prepared to ban the import of U.S. chicken based on the report, but only shipments that originated in the U.S. after the date of the initial incident in Texas. The GOJ had already banned imports from a number of Asian countries reporting outbreaks of highly pathogenic Avian influenza and had recently added Canada to the list, he confirmed.

3. Taimeh asked that if the U.S. sends information to the Paris-based OIE, that a copy be forwarded to the Government of Jordan Ministry of Agriculture. (P.O. Box 2099, Amman, Jordan: FAX: 962-6-569-2515.) He was interested to know the measures taken in surveillance and control of the highly pathogenic avian influenza to ensure that it does not spread.

When asked if Jordan could not consider this to be a regionalized outbreak (that would not necessarily require a ban on all imports from the U.S.), Taimeh replied that the GOJ would need to be assured that the measures taken by the U.S. conformed with the OIE principles for "recognizing a... zone free from a given disease infection." In this case, Taimeh defined the zone as "the other 49 states," although Econoff took pains to describe the outbreak as occurring at a single farm in Gonzalez County, Texas.

4. Jordan imports chicken from the U.S., especially mechanically deboned chicken meat (MDM). One factory last year imported at least 1,500 tons of MDM chicken.  
GNEHM